

January 17, 2011

To: The Senate Local Government Committee

Senator Jon Sonju, Chair  
Senator Art Wittich, Vice Chair  
Senator Steven Gallus  
Senator Bruce Tutvedt  
Senator Edward Buttrey

Senator Shannon Augare  
Senator Lynda Moss  
Senator Gene Buckovich  
Senator Alan Olson

Mr. Chairman and Committee members, my name is Charles Woolley. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

I strongly support SB 117.

I have lived in Sanders County for 30 years and have watched as more and more access to our local resources have been blocked by organizations based outside Montana. In 1981 this was a thriving area, logging, mining, recreation, civic pride, and can-do attitudes.

However time passed and access became progressively more limited.

The result has been a marked decrease in employment, property values, pride, funding for local needs and school enrollments as young families leave the area.

There have also been increases noted as I travel around Sanders, Lake, Flathead and Mineral counties in my job and read the local newspapers.

There have been increases in crime, alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, empty and deserted homes, social and property decay, and rusting machinery that represents the dashed aspirations of many hard working families.

All these are symptoms of local people being denied access to make use of the bountiful resources around them.

SB 117 is a sound answer to help reverse this trend. Please pass SB 117 without amendment.

Thank you. 

Charles Woolley, 424 High Country Road, Plains, MT 59859